

U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 10/751,478
Amendment filed May 25, 2006
Reply to OA dated March 7, 2006

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION:

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 2, line 22, with the following rewritten paragraph:

A first aspect of the present invention provides a substrate supporting apparatus comprising a rotatable ~~check~~ chuck which is provided at its central portion with a hollow and which supports a substrate, and a cylindrical nozzle member having a nozzle hole and capable of vertically moving in the hollow. According to the first aspect, the substrate is placed on the upper surface of the chuck, gas is discharged toward the underside of the substrate, thereby holding the substrate by the upper surface of the chuck in a non-contact state by the Bernoulli theorem. After the nozzle member is upwardly moved, a fork is inserted into a gap between the chuck and the substrate. Thus, the substrate can be detached easily.